

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy

**Parent-Student Handbook
2020-2021**

**70-25 Kessel Street
Forest Hills, NY 11375
Office: 718-793-2086
Fax: 718-897-2144
<https://olmercyca.org/>**

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ **State** _____ **Zip Code** _____
Phone _____

Philosophy

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy seeks to provide a quality Catholic education for our children. We educate the whole child through programs encompassing the spiritual, intellectual, social, psychological and physical development of our students.

Through our religious education program, we strive to develop a well-rounded Christian personality, which will be reflected by respect toward self and others as exemplified by Jesus in the Gospels.

In cooperation with families, the staff works to assist the child in developing a system of values by which to judge the use of knowledge and skills. The rules and disciplines that are incorporated are necessary for the preservation of an atmosphere best adapted to learning. In this way, students will learn to be responsible and accountable.

Mission

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy is committed to academic excellence that is rooted in the Catholic faith, affirmed by the teachings of Jesus Christ, and centered on our service to God, family, and community.

“Education cannot be neutral. It is either positive or negative; either it enriches or it impoverishes; either it enables a person to grow or it lessens, even corrupts him. The mission of schools is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful. And this occurs through a rich path made up of many ingredients. This is why there are so many subjects — because development is the results of different elements that act together and stimulate intelligence, knowledge, the emotions, the body, and so on.”

“If something is true, it is good and beautiful; if it is beautiful; it is good and true; if it is good, it is true and it is beautiful. And together, these elements enable us to grow and help us to love life, even when we are not well, even in the midst of many problems. True education enables us to love life and opens us to the fullness of life.”

-Pope Francis



CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Administration

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy is governed by a Board of Directors and subject to the policies and regulations of the Diocese of Brooklyn.

Admissions

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy proudly accepts students of all races, religions, and countries of origin. There is a yearly registration fee of \$300 per family, along with a supply/technology fee .

New Registrants must provide the following:

- Birth Certificate
- Immunization Record
- Baptismal Certificate (if Catholic)
- Report Card (if entering Grades 1-8)

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy is open to qualified students. Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex or national origin.

Alcohol, Drugs, and Weapons Policy

Drugs and drug abuse is a major threat to the health, education and welfare of students. The use and/or possession of drugs or alcohol on school property or during school activities is strictly forbidden. Smoking or possession of cigarettes/e-cigarettes/vaping devices/etc. on school property or during school activities is forbidden. If students are suspected of any of the above, parents/guardians will be notified. Appropriate disciplinary consequences will be imposed if there is a violator of this policy. Bringing to school, or being under the influence of, alcohol, tobacco products, or drugs is grounds for immediate dismissal from Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy, as is bringing to school a weapon of any kind.

Our school is committed to the prevention of alcohol, drug and tobacco use. We have employed the use of a counselor from the Program for the Development of Human Potential (PDHP) that is funded through the New York State Division of Substance Abuse Services and sponsored by the Office of the Superintendent.

Attendance and Lateness Policy

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy has developed our attendance policy in accordance with New York State Education Law Section 3205 to be implemented on July 1, 2020. This comprehensive attendance policy will help to uphold the philosophy and mission statement of our school/academy, as stated in our handbook.

Education Law of the State of New York mandates school attendance for all children between the ages of 6 and 16, but the responsibility for compliance rests with the parents/legal guardians. The school is required to keep an accurate record of daily attendance, absence and tardiness in the register of attendance in a manner approved by the Commissioner of Education.

- When a child has been absent, a written excuse is required from his or her parents/legal guardians. If

a student is absent without an excuse, or if the school has reason to suspect the validity of the excuse, the principal will investigate the situation.

- When a student has been absent for five days without a satisfactory explanation, a report will be made to the attendance officer of the local public school district.
- Continuing illegal absences, totaling five or more days, will also be reported to the attendance officer at the local public school district office.
- Although each case is different, it should be noted that at 40 truancy days, retention is a strong possibility and principals will contact the local district office to alert the truancy officer.

Regular attendance is essential for success in school. Please report all absences by calling the academy office (718-793-2086) in the morning. **A written note giving the reason for the absence must be given to the child's teacher on the day he/she returns to school. If a note is not received within three days, the absence will be recorded as unexcused/illegal.** Please note that according to New York State Education Law, a vacation is considered to be an unexcused/illegal absence.

According to NYC Department of Health regulations, students may not return to school until they are free of fever and/or vomiting for 24 hours.

All appointments for doctors, dentists, etc. should be scheduled for after 3:00 p.m. Requests for early dismissal must be sent in writing. An adult must come to the school to pick up the student, and that adult must sign the student out. The note should indicate the name of the person (if other than the parent) who will be coming for the student. A student who is absent without the knowledge and consent of the parent/guardian is considered truant.

Parents who wish to pick up absent work may notify the office in the morning by 10AM in order to provide ample time for the teacher to gather the work for the day to be picked up by dismissal time.

Homework due to Vacations/Planned Absences

The school calendar provides for extended weekends throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times so as to eliminate the need to interrupt a child's learning process. Missed assignments are the student's responsibility. Teachers are not required to give make-up tests or assignments for absences due to vacations. No assignments will be given in anticipation of the vacation.

Lateness

School begins at 8:00 a.m. every morning for students in Kindergarten through Grade 8. Lateness is recorded on a child's permanent record card. All students must be online at that time.

If a student arrives after that time, he/she must report to the office for a late pass before going to class. In Grades 5-8 any unexcused lateness will result in a detention.

Birthdays

Students in Nursery through Grade 4 may celebrate birthdays in school with cupcakes and/or ice cream in the classroom and/or lunchroom. **Party favors, gifts of any type and invitations are not to be distributed through the school unless the entire class is invited.** Please notify your child's teacher at least one week in advance if you plan on bringing in any treats. Videotaping or taking photos of the students is also not permitted.

Due to COVID-19, students may not bring food into the classroom to be shared with other students. To promote health and safety, students should consume only the foods that they have brought to school or have been provided by the school.

In Grades 5-8

All students may dress down on their birthday. If the birthday falls over the weekend or over vacation, the child may dress down on the day that school reopens.

Bullying/Harassment Policy and Discipline

The Diocesan Bullying/Harassment Policy is as follows:

Purpose:

The school communities within the Brooklyn Diocese believe in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person. We believe that all students, school employees and volunteers have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. All members of the school community, in turn, have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance. Research shows that students who learn in a safe and supportive environment succeed academically. Students have a right to learn in an environment free of any harassment that substantially interferes with their education.

Definition:

Bullying, bias-based harassment /intimidation are intentional, repeated, hurtful acts (physical, verbal, written) committed by one or more persons towards another person or persons. It usually involves an actual or perceived imbalance of power which can be physical, emotional or verbal.

If not addressed, bullying can lead to the creation of a hostile, offensive or intimidating school environment and can affect a student's educational opportunities.

The behaviors include but are not limited to:

- **Physical:** physical violence, stalking, threats, aggressive or menacing gestures, exclusion from peer groups which is intended to humiliate or isolate the target (relational bullying),
- **Verbal:** taunts, teasing, derogatory language, derogatory jokes, name calling, slurs, spreading rumors,
- **Written:** written or graphic material including graffiti containing comments or stereotypes that are electronically written and transmitted via internet, social messaging sites, blogs, instant messaging, text messages, cell phone, webcams. This would also include forwarding such messages if received. This generally constitutes cyberbullying.

Reporting Procedures:

- The targeted student, parent/guardian of a student or other students in the school (bystanders), or any school staff who believe that bullying has occurred should report the incident to the principal.
- The principal needs to conduct an investigation by interviewing all parties separately.
- The parents of all involved students should be notified.

- If it is determined that bullying has occurred the child who bullied is to be subject to consequences per the school's disciplinary code.
- Parents should be advised to contact the appropriate law enforcement agency if the situation warrants such a report.
- Referral to counseling should be made for all parties if deemed necessary.
- The principal must follow up to see that the offending conduct has stopped.
- All students should be notified that retaliation against anyone who makes a report will not be tolerated and those that retaliate will be subject to disciplinary actions.

The Diocesan CyberBullying/Harassment Policy is as follows:

1. **Purpose:**

One of the main duties of the Academies and Parish Schools within the Diocese of Brooklyn is to provide a safe environment for our students. With the current state of technology, internet use and digital communications, this extends beyond the bounds of the physical building. Students now have 24x7 access to each other through computers, smart phones and tablet devices which can provide both an enriching experience for learning and an unfortunate opportunity for mischief. The Diocese of Brooklyn, in an attempt to harness the good and discourage and protect from the bad, has developed the following policy and guidelines to govern cyber-bullying.

2. **Scope of Use:**

This policy applies to the use of technology both inside and outside of the Academy/Parish School. When personal outside use of a technology violates this policy in whole or in part, these actions may be subject to disciplinary measures found within.

3. **Definitions of Cyber-Bullying:**

The following are types of cyber-bullying that can occur. This is not a comprehensive list of every action that can be deemed cyber-bullying, and items may be removed or added without prior notice. This listing is adapted from the New York State Department of Justice Definition of Cyber-Bullying.

1. **Flaming** – The act of posting electronic messages that are deliberately hostile, insulting, mean, angry or vulgar to one or more persons either privately or publicly to an online group
2. **Denigration** – Occurs when a person sends or publishes cruel rumors, gossip or untrue statements about a person to intentionally damage the victims reputation or friendships.
3. **Bash Boards** – Online bulletin boards or forums where people post anything they choose. Generally, postings are mean, hateful and malicious.
4. **Impersonation** – The act of posing as or pretending to be another person. This can either be through a malicious attack resulting in the takeover of an existing account (hacked/stolen credentials) or through the creation of a fake account in someone else's name. Considerable damage can be done through this time of attack to the victim's reputation and relationships.
5. **Outing** – Occurs when confidential, private or embarrassing information is posted or shared publicly. Can include the forwarding of email messages, text messages or photos meant to be private to an unintended third party recipient(s).

6. **Trickery** – The act of tricking someone into divulging personal, embarrassing or private information either publicly or to a person who then uses that information for malicious intents. Information gained can be used to blackmail, post publicly online or for person gains depending upon the information.
7. **Exclusion** – An indirect method of cyber-bullying in which someone is intentionally excluded from an online group, community or activity.
8. **Harassment** – The act of sending repeated insulting, hurtful, rude or vulgar message
9. **Happy Slapping** – a real world attack which is recorded and then posted online. Often referred to as a practical joke by the attackers, hence the term “happy slapping”
10. **Text Wars or Attacks** – When several people gang up on a victim sending the target repeated emails and text messages resulting in emotional and possibly financial damage for data and messaging costs
11. **Online Polls** – potentially harmful or demeaning, they can contain malicious questions such as “Who is the ugliest person in 8th grade?” or “Who do you love to hate?”
12. **Sending Malicious Code** – When intentionally perpetrated with malicious intent, can be used for spying, tracking, stalking, or to harm devices or the victim themselves
13. **Images and Videos** - Due to the prevalence and accessibility of camera cell phones, photographs and videos of unsuspecting victims, taken in bathrooms, locker rooms or other compromising situations, are being distributed electronically. Some images are emailed to other people, while others are published on video sites such as *YouTube*.
14. **Griefing** – Chronically causing grief to other members of an online community or intentionally disrupting the immersion of another in their game play
15. **Trolling** – Lurking or “trolling” message boards and forums for the purpose of defaming, “flaming”, annoying, embarrassing or otherwise being hostile to users through public posts. The victim may or may not be known to the “troll” and “trolls” are often able to act anonymously.

4. Responsibilities of the Academy/Parish School:

In accordance with New York State Law on Cyberbullying, inappropriate, defamatory, or content found to be injurious to a Academy/Parish School community member may result in disciplinary action, even if done outside of Academy/Parish School premises or using devices not owned or controlled by the Academy/Parish School. All instances of such behavior must be reported immediately to the administration, who will investigate the matter and enforce the consequences deemed appropriate.

- Monitoring of communications of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communication
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and
- Measures restricting minors’ access to materials harmful to them
- Educate students on cyber-bullying to encourage them to identify bullying behavior, avoid exhibiting the behavior and keep themselves from being the victim of bullying behavior.
- Provide guidance and counsel students on both sides of the conflict.

Academy/Parish School administrators, faculty and staff are responsible to ensure activities involving students do not harbor or promote cyber-bullying in any way. Inadvertent exclusion or inappropriate comments that go unseen can quickly become a serious situation. What may seem like a harmless joke in class or online could begin a cycle of bullying, or be a sign of something much larger that has been going on.

5. **Responsibility of Students:**

As a member of the Diocese of Brooklyn community, students are expected to act in accordance with the tenants of the Catholic Church. This includes conducting yourself in an appropriate manner in the digital realm and treating others and yourself with respect, kindness and understanding. It is imperative for each student to ensure that this is protected for both themselves and other members of their Academy/Parish School community. The following are guidelines to help students protect themselves and others and recognize situations and how to handle them.

Protecting Yourself from Cyber-Bullying and Cyber-Attacks

- Do not share personal information over the internet that could be used to facilitate an attack
- Never share account credentials with anyone other than your parents or guardians
- If you are being harassed by someone, report the user to the appropriate administrator (such as Facebook or Twitter), tell your parent/guardian immediately and do your best to take screenshots or print the offensive material to document the incident
- If the person is a member of your Academy/Parish School community, also inform the school of the incident providing any documentation that you can
- Block users who engage in bullying behavior from contacting you
- Set social media accounts such that posts need approval before they can be seen publicly on your page (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
- Do not engage others who are looking to “bait” you into an altercation. This is often a tactic to lure victims into revealing information that is then used for the attack
- Avoid aggressive behavior that could provoke others to retaliate

Protecting Others from Cyber-Bullying

- Do not participate in any of the behaviors outlined in the definition above
- When communicating digitally, be mindful to show respect and understanding
- Refrain from using derogatory, defaming, embarrassing or vulgar language when communicating
- Report any aggressive behavior observed to the appropriate administrator, and your parent or guardian
- If it involves members of the Academy/Parish School community, inform the school as well with any documentation you can provide
- Discourage others who may be thinking, planning or talking after the fact about cyber-bullying or attacks they have/will engage(d) in

Identifying Cyber-Bullying

It is important to understand that not all undesirable interactions on the internet are cyber-bullying. By definition, bullying is a recurring behavior. Repeated attacks through email, forum posts, instant or text messages or the like constitute cyber-bullying. A single incident, while not condoned or accepted, is not necessarily cyber-bullying. The instant transfer and duplicative nature of digital mediums expands the threat of cyber-bullying and must be considered in its identification. If an act deemed to be inappropriate is conducted even once, but is then shared and transmitted repeatedly over a digital medium, that act crosses into a case of

cyberbullying even if it was the first/only occurrence and must be handled as such.

7. Policy Violations:

Violation of this policy in whole or in part may result in any or all of the following and will be issued at the discretion of the school/academy principal:

- Loss of use/privileges of school/academy technology.
- Disciplinary action including, but not limited to, detention, suspension, expulsion, and /or legal action by the school/academy, civil authorities, and/or other involved parties.
- Compensation for damages, both physical and punitive, incurred due to actions in violation of this policy

Infractions (Grades 5-8)

Grades 5-8 Infractions may be given for any of the following: may be subject to in-house suspension, at-home suspension, or expulsion based upon the severity of the incident

- Any Uniform Violations
- Academic
 - o Lack of attention/sleeping during class
 - o Not doing classwork
 - o Talking during class
 - o Unprepared for class (materials needed to foster proper education, such as and not limited to; homework needed for class, classwork, supplies, etc)
 - o Improper care of textbooks
 - o Neglecting to sign out for the bathroom/water fountain
 - o Failure to return a detention slip signed

***Five Academic Infractions will result in a 30 minute afterschool detention.**

Behavior

- o Disruptive behavior (Persistent fooling around/out of seat, causing negative attention to oneself, etc...)
- o Chewing gum/eating in class
- o Disrespect/rudeness/impertinence will result in an **automatic detention**
- o Running in the stairs/halls
- o Talking in the halls/stars
- o Cell phone use (without permission, in halls during A.M. and P.M. lineup)
- o Improper use of Chromebook/iPad
- o Aggressive/violent behavior
- o Cyberbullying
- o Gossip
- o Talking during a fire drill/lockdown
- o Defacing school property
- o Removal of face mask
- o Violating social distancing guidelines
 - o **Refusal to wear a face mask, a student will be sent home**

***Three Behavioral Infractions will result in an After School Detention**

Infraction Notification

Teachers will;

Notify the parents of the infractions when the detention slip goes home.

- This documentation will be received through email
- Must be signed or receipt of acknowledgment
- It will state the infractions given
- There will be a key attached as to the codes of infractions and their meanings
- This will help parents understand the reason for the infraction
- Academic Infractions will deduct points from a student's classwork grade

Hold detention (CDC Guidelines in place) on Wednesdays from;

2:00- 2:30 P.M. (Academic infractions)

2:00- 3:00 P.M. (Behavioral infractions)

Teachers will not;

- Notify a parent everytime an infraction is given
 - Each student will clearly know if they have received an infraction on a given day
 - When asking your child about their day is a good time to inquire if they have received any infractions.

School Discipline

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy has high standards of behavior as well as high academic standards. Students are held responsible for their words and actions. Detention will take place every Thursday from 3:00-4:00 pm for students who break school rules.

Students learn to be responsible, make positive choices, and demonstrate respect for their peers, teachers, and themselves. The students learn in an environment that models mutual respect, friendship, and cooperation.

Some expectations are:

- Demonstrating respect and consideration for teachers and peers
- Abiding by the policies of the academies
- Wear the school uniform with pride
- Respecting academy and parish property; keeping the academy free of graffiti and litter
- Demonstrating responsibility by completing all homework and classwork
- Arriving to the academy on time

The suspension of a student from school is a serious matter that requires a meeting with the student's parents/guardians and the principal. Any serious violation of school regulations including, but not limited to: disrespect, violence, fighting, theft, foul language, endangering others, vandalism, or repeated academic failure, may result in suspension. The purpose of the meeting with the principal will detail the reason for the suspension and the corrective measures which must result in discernible improvement in the student's conduct. Repeated suspensions or failure to meet school standards may result in the expulsion of the offending student.

The principal will make the final determination on expulsion of students. Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy reserves the right to expel any student who in the judgment of the administration has committed a serious offense involving drugs, violence, alcohol, theft, violation of the technology policy, weapons possession, abuse of a teacher/student, vandalism, failure to meet academic standards, or commits any combination of acts judged

serious enough by the administration.

Bus Service

Bus passes are subject to the guidelines of the New York City Transportation Bureau. All requests for bus service must be made in writing.

While students are being transported to and from OLMCA, it is expected that they will uphold the behavior expectations of the academy/ parish school as well as rules set forth by the bus driver or bus company. Students who continuously disregard bus procedures and rules are at risk of losing their access to bus transportation.

Each bus company must hold an evacuation drill at least once a year. Students are expected to follow all instructions as given by the bus driver or other adult facilitating the drill.

Only a licensed public carrier that is fully insured should be used to transport students. Teachers or administrators should not transport students in their personal vehicles. Parents/ legal guardians must provide authorization for their child to be transported by someone else. This includes transportation for dismissal as well as extracurricular activities.

Catholic Identity

The mission of Catholic Education is to form children in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ as celebrated in the Catholic Church, while providing a comprehensive academic education that will help them reach their full human potential and contribute to the common good of our nation and the world. Ultimately, the mission of all Catholic education is to lead those entrusted to its care to find salvation in Jesus Christ.

In *Catholic Schools on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (#11) Saint John Paul II wrote that Catholic schools are "...the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out. Catholic schools are at once places of evangelization, of complete formation, of enculturation, of apprenticeship in a lively dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds."

Diocesan academies and schools strive to emulate the words of Saint John Paul II by:

- creating an evangelizing community, where people come to have a better and deeper understanding of Christ and His Church
- recognizing the importance of multicultural, multi-faceted, academically sound educational programs that meet the needs of the poor and the rich, the Catholic and the non-Catholic, the wise and the not so learned
- welcoming members to the school community regardless of culture, race, or religion and celebrating the diversity that exists within our communities, churches, and schools
- creating an environment that encourages young people to grow, not separated from others, but as part of a larger community, as part of the family of God
- not only promoting and encouraging academically sound individuals, but rejoicing with children who

are spiritually, theologically, and liturgically enlivened and fulfilled

Christ is the reason for our school. The Religion curriculum follows Diocesan guidelines and standards. Students in Nursery and Grades K-8 will receive daily religion lessons that educate them to informed and active Catholics. Students will be made aware of Christian values in their daily lives.

Students in Grade K-8 will attend a monthly school mass every First Friday. Grades K-8 will go to Mass with their class either on a Tuesday or Thursday at least once a month. Family members are always encouraged to attend.

Cell Phone and Electronic Device Policy

Students are not permitted to use a cell phone and/or the office phone unless permission is given by the principal or school secretary. Student use of the phone is for emergencies only. Students in all grades will have their cell phones and any other electronic devices collected each morning, stored in a locked closet, and returned at the end of the day.

Students are never permitted to use their cell phones in the school building. It must be turned off as they enter the school building. Students may not take pictures with their cell phones on school property. No other electronic devices (iPods, iPads, PDAs, gaming systems, etc.) may be used in the school building.

Any child found using a cell phone or electronic device will have it collected by the principal, member of the faculty, or staff member. For the first offense, it will be returned to the child at the end of the *following* school day. For the second offense, it will be returned to the child *one full week* after it is collected. For the third offense, it will be returned on the last day of school.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy assumes no responsibility for lost, damaged, or stolen electronics that were not given to the teacher in accordance with school policy.

Communication between Academy and Home

Information from the academy is sent home regularly. Parents are asked to return all required notices promptly. In addition, the academy uses *Option C*, a telephone broadcast system and an e-mail broadcast system to keep parents informed of school closures and upcoming events. Teachers have 24 hours to respond to an e-mail or letter during office hours of 8:00am-3:00pm.

For the safety and security of all students and staff, all visitors, including parents, must come to the school office upon entering the building and get a visitor's pass. The permission of the principal is necessary before parents and other visitors proceed beyond the office.

Parents are offered the opportunity to conference with teachers twice a year at report card conferences. In addition, teachers are available by appointment whenever the need arises. Teachers are to be given adequate notice for scheduling a conference, which may never take place during a teacher's class time. Teachers and/or the principal may also request conferences with parents. Parents are asked to respond to these requests when they are made.

Parents are to be exemplary models of behavior for their children. Therefore, it is expected that the parents will support the school policies and rules.

Option C is the dominant platform of teacher/parent communication and should be checked on a regular basis (Daily) for any missing assignments.

Crisis Management and Safety Procedures

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy has implemented a “crisis plan” in case of a lockdown emergency. All teachers and staff are aware of the procedure to follow to keep your children safe. Lockdown procedures will be practiced at least once per trimester. In the event of such an emergency, circumstances permitting, the building will be evacuated and students will be moved to one of two secure designated locations:

1. Our Lady of Mercy Parish Hall
2. PS144
3. Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Catholic Academy

Drop-off and Dismissal Procedures

Drop-off

Nursery AM classes meet on Mondays through Fridays from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM.

Nursery Full Day classes meets on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM. These classes meet on Wednesdays from 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

Pre-K for All classes meet on Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 AM -2:50PM.

Nursery and Pre-K students will enter from the side door closest to the church.

Grades K-8 classes meets on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 8:00 AM – 2:45 PM. These classes meet on Wednesdays from 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM. All students should enter through the main entrance. Teachers will be supervising the students on all floors.

Dismissal

Nursery and Pre-K students will be dismissed at 2:50 through the side door closest to the church. Dismissal for students in Grades K-8 will be at **3:00 PM**. Students in Grades K-2 will be dismissed in the courtyard. Grades 3-8 will dismiss from the main entrance.

A note must be submitted to the school office when a child is released early and must specify to whom the child may be released to. A parent or guardian signs the child out of the main entrance. Any designee of the parent must show picture identification when picking up the student.

Please do not double-park your car on Kessel Street. This creates a hazardous situation for our students and everyone involved.

The school grounds are not playgrounds. Students will not be permitted to play in the following areas:

- The grassy areas on Kessel Street and Juno near the school, church, rectory, and convent
- No ball playing, bicycles or scooters are permitted at any time.

Please do not block the driveways of our neighbors or double-park your car. This creates a hazardous

situation for our students and everyone involved.

Extended Day Program

An Early Drop Off and an After School program are important services offered by the school. Qualified personnel supervise these programs. The fees and time schedules are available from the office. Payments are due at the end of each week.

Field Trips

Field Trips are privileges offered to students and are expected to attend as part of their academic grade. Students can be denied participation in them if they fail to meet the academic or behavioral requirements of the school. In grades 6-8 the severity of detention(s) can prevent a student from attending a field trip. Students with an Epi-Pen may have restrictions for attending a field trip.

To participate in the trip, the student must return a properly filled out form provided by the school at least twenty-four hours prior to the scheduled trip. **No other form, written letter or phone call will be accepted.**

Parent chaperones are chosen randomly from those parents who have completed Virtus Training. Every parent has an equal opportunity to chaperone once. Parents who are not “official” chaperones may not drive their car to a field trip destination with the plan of accompanying the class on a field trip. Our insurance company insures “official” chaperones and participation by unofficial chaperones jeopardizes the protection for our students and all other “official” adults on the trip.

Depending on the return time of the class trip hot lunch may not be served to students and therefore he/she is expected to bring in a bagged lunch (no glass bottles) on the day of the trip.

Financial Policies

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy offers parents a private school education for their children at an affordable cost. The tuition and fees are reviewed annually and adjusted as necessitated by the budget. The operation expenses of the academy are met by the tuition, fees and fund raising.

It is expected that all parents will support the academy’s fundraising events throughout the year. There is mandatory participation in the candy sale in January (one carton per student) and pay a fee of \$200.00 for lunchroom supervision. All families are asked to participate in the Home Academy Association.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy has partnered with FACTS Management Company to facilitate our tuition payment program and financial aid assessment. FACTS offers greater efficiency and financial stability for the academy while providing convenience to families. FACTS allows parents to make secure automated payments for tuition directly from your checking or saving account.

All families must create an account and enroll with FACTS. Your enrollment/registration is not complete until your payment plan with FACTS Management has been established.

Tuition is paid over ten months from August through May.

No child may begin class on the first day of the new school year if there is any balance from the previous year.

Students leaving Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy for any reason will have all transfer records withheld if any money is owed to the school. In arrears tuition will result in the withholding of report cards.

Grading

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy follows the current marking code of the Office of Catholic Schools of the Brooklyn Diocese:

<u>ACADEMIC CODE</u>	<u>PROGRESS CODE</u>
A+ 97-100	1 Does Not Meet Standard
A 93- 96	2 Approaching Standard
B+ 89-92	3 Meets Standard
B 85-88	4 Meets Standard with Distinction
C+ 81-84	X Not Assessed this Trimester
C 77-80	
D+ 74-76	
D 70-73	
F Below 70	

Students are graded using a variety of measurement tools including: Class work, homework, independent work/projects, cooperative learning projects, tests, and student portfolios.

Report Cards are distributed at Parent-Teacher Conferences in December and March. They are given to students in June. Progress reports are issued approximately one month before report cards. They must be signed and returned to the teacher within three days.

Homework

Homework is a mandatory aspect of the school curriculum. It is the student's responsibility to complete regular and make-up homework assignments. If a student is absent, a homework "buddy" will assist in the gathering of assignments and books. Parents should sign their children's homework assignments to indicate that they are aware that their child has done their homework.

Returning tests and graded assignments with a parent signature is part of a child's homework grade, and is required in Grades 1-8.

Homework assignments are posted daily in Google classroom– www.olmercyca.org . Check Option C daily for updates on missing assignments/homework. Teachers are not required to accept homework assignments after their due date, with the exception of excused absences. Any late assignments accepted are at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

Students will not be permitted to return to their classroom after 3PM to retrieve any belongings.

In Grades 5-8

Late assignments will only be accepted **two school calendar days** after the assignment is due. If the student is absent he/she will be given the opportunity to make up the missed work. A grace period will be given for any

extenuating circumstances due to an absence. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with their teachers for any missing work after being absent.

Honor Roll

Students in Grades 3-8 who consistently excel in all areas will be eligible for the Honor Roll each trimester.

The criteria for the Honor Roll is as follows:

Principal's List: 97% average in major subjects with no grade below 93% in major subjects, no failures in minor subjects, conduct must be satisfactory or better, no more than five latenesses.

First Honors: 95% average in major subjects with no grade below 90% in major subjects, no failures in minor subjects, conduct must be satisfactory or better, no more than five latenesses.

Second Honors: 90% average in major subjects, no grade below 85% in major subjects, no failures in minor subjects, conduct must be satisfactory or better, no more than five latenesses.

Honorable Mention: 85% average in major subjects, no grade below 80% in major subjects, no failures in minor subjects, conduct must be satisfactory or better, no more than five latenesses.

IESP Procedures & the Evaluation Process

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy can accommodate many specifications found in an IESP. For us to do so, the parent must provide a copy of the IESP and meet with the principal to determine if and how the child's needs will be met.

Services currently provided on site include: Speech Therapy, SETSS, and Counseling. An evaluation may be requested at any time and may be initiated by the parent, the teacher, or the administration.

Inclement Weather

If it is necessary to close the academy, an announcement will be made via telephone broadcast (*Option C*). The announcement may also be a general one announcing that all of the schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn are closed on television and radio. You may also check the school website: www.olmercyca.org for information. Please do not call the academy and/or the rectory.

Insurance

The mandatory supply/technology fees purchase insurance for all students at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy. They are covered during the school day and during school activities through this enrollment program.

Lunchroom Regulations

Lunch boxes and food/drink containers should be labeled. Glass bottles or glass containers are not allowed. Please do not send in any food that needs to be heated. Outside food (McDonalds, Subway, etc.) is not permitted. Students are expected to be respectful and courteous to each staff member supervising a lunch a

period and to each other.

Medical Policies

Please provide the school office, nurse, and teacher with up-to-date medical information. It is necessary for us to know if your child has any medical conditions such as heart problems, epilepsy, asthma, or allergies. Upon the first day of school, your child will be required to have a medical form completed by their pediatrician. This form will also require up-to-date immunization information.

Prescription medicine must be brought to the nurse's office with a note from the parent/guardian and instructions from the doctor. **Medication of any type (prescription or over-the-counter) is not allowed in the classroom for safety reasons.**

Immunization

The New York City Department of Health requires all children from Nursery through Grade 8 to have a complete physical examination before entering school. In addition children must be immunized according to age specifications against the following diseases:

- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Polio
- Whooping Cough
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Hib (Influenza Type B)
- Chicken Pox
- Hepatitis B
- Pneumococcal (For students born after 1/1/2008)
- Tdap (for students in 6th grade)
- Meningitis
- Flu (For students in Nursery and Pre-K)

Information on age specific requirements may be obtained from the Department of Health.

As per New York State law, no religious exemptions will be accepted.

Height and Weight

A record is kept of each student's height and weight reported by the parent on the Emergency Cards distributed at the beginning of the school year.

Vision Screening

The Department of Health Vision team screens children in grades K, 1, 3 and 5 and those recommended by the teacher or nurse. If your child does not pass this screening, you will be notified in writing.

Communicable Diseases

Parents must report communicable diseases to the school office. These include, but are not limited to measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever, rubella, head lice, hepatitis, tuberculosis, whooping cough (pertussis), Fifth's disease or meningitis.

Illness in School

If your child becomes ill while in school, we will attempt to make the contacts indicated on your Emergency Contact Card. It is necessary for the child to be signed out by the adult who will be taking him/her home. No child will be allowed to go home alone during the school day.

Accident or Injury

We will follow the same procedure described for illness. All of the children are enrolled in the school insurance plan issued by American Home Assurance Company. It provides coverage during school hours or during any school affiliated activity.

Administration of Medication

If a student must take medication during school hours, the parent and the child's doctor in accordance with New York City and State requirements must fill out authorization forms. Only a school nurse can administer medication. School personnel are not permitted to administer medication.

Non-Custodial Parent and the Buckley Amendment:

In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to academic records and to other school related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

Custody, Guardianship Orders

Parents must provide accurate custodial information to be kept on file at the academy or parish school. Non-custodial parents do have rights. The law protects non-custodial parents and maintains that parents do not cease to be parents when they no longer have custody of their children. The Diocese of Brooklyn abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, a school or parish academy will provide the non-custodial parents with access to academic records and other school information regarding his or her child. *If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to provide the school with a court certified copy of the court order.*

Option C

The Option C Parent Portal allows parents to be involved in their child's academic life on their schedule and more efficiently. Rather than writing a note to a teacher to see how their child is doing on assignments, they can access the portal and see it in real time. As grades are recorded for student work, they can be shared with parents, giving any time up-to-date progress reports.

Option C's Parent Alert System is a flexible notification system that lets its audiences - parents, principals, and school staff - communicate quickly and reliably. Academies and parish schools may also create alerts to send to parents regarding fundraisers, events, drills, community affairs, school closings and any information they would like to communicate quickly. Users can decide how they want to be reached, either by voice, text or email, or any combination. Parents should check their settings on Option C to ensure that all contact information is up to date and all options are set correctly.

Parental Obligations

Home is the first place where a child learns love and respect for God and neighbor. Parents/legal guardians, in choosing a Catholic school to continue the education begun at home; have responsibilities as well as opportunities to share in the continuance of their children's education.

Parental involvement consists of parents/legal guardians and staff meeting together because of common interest in the child. It is expressed in many ways such as sharing in student supervision in the lunchroom or playground or serving as library or teacher aide. In some instances, parents/legal guardians may be asked to assist in advocacy in all areas that would benefit the schools, including programs that request government assistance, in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent. The involvement of the total family is also a means of communicating the academy's and parish school's performance to the total parish community.

Parental support for the education of their children is of the utmost importance. Parents and legal guardians are also expected to uphold the behavioral expectations set forth for students and staff within the academy or parish school community. Failure of parents to act in a manner compatible with the values of the academy or parish school may result in student dismissal.

Every academy or parish school is encouraged to establish a Home School Association. Its purpose is the educational enrichment of parents/legal guardians and teachers. The goal of the Home School Association is to foster a clearer understanding of the mutual responsibilities of parents/legal guardians and teachers regarding the education of the students.

An added responsibility of the Home School Association will be to assist in the fundraising efforts of the academy or parish school. In the school, this is done in coordination with the administration. In an academy, it is done in coordination with the board of directors of the academy. No organization may hold title to accounts nor have access to funds raised for the academy or parish school. All financial transactions must be approved by the pastor/academy board of directors.

Report Cards

Students must achieve a level of academic proficiency and social/emotional development in order to be promoted to the next grade. Any student who is in danger of being retained will receive notice with the March report card. Grade 8 students who fail to meet academic requirements will have their diplomas withheld. Parents in Grades 1-8 may check Option C for regular updates of their child's grades. Students may be required to attend summer school if they do not meet the requirements for promotion.

We have three formal parent/teacher conferences:

- September (Orientation meeting)
- December (1st Trimester Report Card Conference)
- March (2nd Trimester Report Card Conference)

Children in Grades 1-8 will receive progress reports at the midpoint of the first, second, and third trimesters. Please consult the school calendar for distribution dates, and return the signed report on the following school day.

Student Records

Change of Address/Phone Number

For student safety, it is imperative that parents/ legal guardians alert the academy or parish school to any

changes in address or phone number. Parents/ legal guardians must also provide the academy or parish school with an adequate number of emergency contacts (with up to date information).

Educational Records Requests

In the event of a student transferring to a different academy, parish school, or public school, the school will provide student records to the school of transfer. Requests can be made in writing by the parent/ legal guardian or by the school that the student will be transferring to. The school office is responsible for sending student records directly to the school of transfer. If records are not provided in a timely fashion, parents or legal guardians may contact the Office of the Superintendent to receive further assistance in this matter.

Authorization to Release Records

Academies and parish schools may not release the records of students without the written consent of the parents/legal guardians to any individual, agency or organization other than the following:

- Other academy or parish school officials who have legitimate educational interests.
- Officials of other academies or parish schools in which the student intends to enroll.
- Officials of the courts with lawfully issued judicial process, i.e., subpoena, court order, etc.
- Please note health records are the property of the Department of Health.

Review of a Child's Official Records

Parents/legal guardians have the right to inspect any and all material which is part of their child's permanent record. Academies and parish schools require parents/legal guardians to provide a written request prior to when they wish to examine their child's permanent record. At the time of inspection, the academy or parish school administrator, or qualified delegate, will be present.

Supervision of the Play Street

Teachers supervise the students during lunch recess. During lunch recess, students may not reenter the building without the teacher's permission. Students are to remain in the center of the play street – away from the grass and corners for safety reasons.

Technology

The use of the computers is for educational endeavors only. All students are expected to use the technology appropriately and sign the acceptable use policy. Engagement in online blogs such as, but not limited to, Instagram®, Facebook®, Snapchat®, Whats App®, etc., may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student's blog includes defamatory comments regarding the school, the faculty, other students or the parish.

Here at Our Lady of Mercy, the students have access to the Internet. Our goal is to provide a safe and educational environment for your child to use the internet and computer technology at school. We provide convenient, supervised access to search engines on all our internet terminals.

To prevent any abuse of internet activities, and the school's technology equipment, each student in grades 3 to 8 and their parents/guardians are required to read and return signed our Acceptable Use Policy Agreement. No student will be allowed access to our school's computers without this form being signed and returned to school.

RULES OF CONDUCT

- Computers will not be used for anything other than teacher directed use. The installation, downloading, or modification of any software by students without permission is prohibited.
- Students will respect copyright laws and licensing agreements, there will be no plagiarism.
- Students will not make any attempt to gain unauthorized access to restricted files or networks. Including other student's saved work.
- If a student comes across any material that is, or they feel is objectionable or questionable the student will advise a teacher immediately.
- Students will not visit chat rooms or instant message anyone, unless supervised for educational purposes.
- Checking web based e-mail and social network accounts without permission is prohibited.
- Sending e-mails or instant messages (IM's) that are offensive and/or threatening in any manner will result in disciplinary action.
- No student will give out any personal information about themselves or any member of the school over the Internet.
- Vandalism of computer hardware, software or other school property is not tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.
- Taking of pictures or videos during the school day by students is prohibited without the permission of the teacher and/or school administration.

Tuition

Tuition and other fee schedules

The academy or parish school will collect tuition and fees over a ten month period. This ten month period will typically extend from August to May. Tuition collection will begin prior to the start of the school year.

Academies and parish schools reserve the right to place severely delinquent accounts in the hands of a collection agency or its attorneys for collection. It is not our desire that any family should incur unnecessary legal fees or suffer further embarrassment or inconvenience in this regard. Again, we encourage prompt communication with the academy in an effort to avoid litigation.

In order to withdraw a student, the parent must submit written notice to the principal in advance of the withdraw date. This enables the academy to prepare necessary information and settle accounts. No student records will be

forwarded to another academy or school until all accounts have been settled.

Following the terms of the enrollment contract, refunds will be made only in accordance with the stated guidelines and/or at the discretion of the administration. The refund must be requested prior to the start of the period for which payment would be made.

Resources for Tuition assistance

Catholic education is meant to be available to every Catholic family. Every family desiring a Catholic education for their child(ren) will participate to the extent capable in the cost of providing that education.

Each family in need of tuition assistance must complete a scholarship application through Futures in Education, which may currently be found at: www.futuresineducation.org/scholarships . The one exception is families returning to the Teddy Forstmann program coordinated by Children's Scholarship Fund.

If the family requests additional assistance beyond the awarded amount, the request will be forwarded to the Tuition Assistance Committee. The review will be completed as early as possible.

Tuition Assistance Committee

The Tuition Assistance Committee is an essential advisory body to the pastor/board chair and principal. It has a two-fold purpose.

- The Committee will have the responsibility of direct involvement in the monitoring and collection of tuition arrears from the families of its respective school or academy.
- The Committee will be empowered to recommend when needed a partial deferment of tuition for families that have demonstrated true financial need or face unforeseen extraordinary circumstances. Such a deferment will establish a fair and just tuition rate that will allow students to remain enrolled when even scholarship assistance is not enough. This discernment must be guided by an approved process that is fair, transparent and reasonable. Any recommendation made by the Tuition Assistance Committee must be approved by the respective pastor of a parochial school and the Board of Directors for an academy.

Should there be a concern regarding the tuition assistance process or if an appeal for discernment is requested, parents/guardians should present their concerns in writing. In the case of a Catholic academy, the letter should be addressed to the chairperson of the Board of Directors. The response from the pastor or chairperson would be final.

FACTS

FACTS is a tuition management company designed to make tuition collection simpler for families as well as academies and parish schools. There will be one FACTS record per family, and each student must be listed separately. This provides valuable detail about the charges and discounts each student is receiving. In turn, this provides the academy better reporting. A major benefit of FACTS is the ability to process automatic drafts of the payer's bank account or credit card. There is a 2.85% convenience fee on credit card transactions. FACTS does offer an invoicing option as well. With this option, FACTS will send an invoice to the payer (via email or postal mail) 20 calendar days prior to the payment due date. The payer must then initiate payment either by

using a credit card or bank account online, over the phone, or by mailing a check directly to FACTS. Families are encouraged to pay via automatic draft. FACTS also allows for flexible payment options. Common options are monthly payments, three trimester payments, and a payment in full.

Tuition Delinquency

- By standard practice, FACTS will send payment reminders prior to any due date, returned payment notices in the case of a failed payment, and will make automated phone calls to delinquent payers. Payers who fail to communicate with the academy and resolve the delinquency through a payment schedule approved by the academy will result in suspension of services for the student.
- Students will not be permitted to attend class at the start of the trimester should any balance be past due.
- No student will be permitted to begin an academic year unless all registration and other required fees are current. Registration and other required fees are paid through FACTS Tuition Management at enrollment. Enrollment for students whose families are not current in the registration or other required fees by June 30 may be cancelled at the discretion of the academy. In no event will students be permitted to attend class at the commencement of the academic year unless the delinquency is paid in full.
- In order to participate in graduation activities, all debts for eighth grade students must be cleared by the first Monday of May. Eighth grade transcripts will not be released to the high schools if the financial obligations have not been met.
- All fees must be paid in full before records or progress reports will be processed. It is the sole discretion of the academy to withhold trimester exams, report cards, transcripts, records, and diplomas until all financial obligations are satisfied in full.

Uniform

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn believes that clothes do not define a person. The wearing of a uniform allows everyone to be seen for who they are, not by what they have. The purpose of a uniform is a means of consistency in student dress, while keeping costs to a minimum. It also reduces the problem of competitive dressing. Students, unless otherwise notified by Administration, will wear the school uniform.

All students are expected to keep themselves well-groomed and neatly dressed at all times. A clean and healthy appearance is important. Any form of dress or hair style which is considered by the Administrations to be contrary to good hygiene or which is distractive or disruptive in appearance and detrimental to the purpose or conduct of the school will not be permitted. All clothing must be clean, neatly pressed, and in good repair. No ripped, torn, or defaced item may be worn.

All Uniforms are supplied by Flynn & O'Hara Uniform Company.

Nursery, Pre-K and Kindergarten Uniform

The following tops and bottoms may be mixed and matched:

Tops: White Short-Sleeved "Golf" Shirt, Light Blue Tee shirt, White Turtleneck, Navy Blue Sweatshirt

Bottoms: Navy Blue Gym Shorts, Navy Blue Walking Shorts, Navy Blue Skort, Navy Blue Sweat Pants

Footwear: Navy or White Crew or Knee-Hi Socks, Shoes with a Velcro Closure

Grades 1 – 4

Summer Uniform for Boys (Worn May 1st through October 15th)

- White Knit Short-Sleeved “Golf” Shirt
- Navy Walking Shorts
- White Crew Socks
- School Approved Sneakers or School Shoes

Summer Uniform for Girls (Worn May 1st through October 15th)

- White Short Sleeve Polo Shirt
- Navy Skort
- Navy Walking Shorts
- White Crew Socks
- School Approved Sneakers or School Shoes

Gym Uniform for Boys and Girls (Must be worn on Gym Days)

- Light Blue Gym T-Shirt
- Navy Micromesh Gym Shorts
- Navy Blue Sweatshirt (In Cold Weather)
- Navy Blue Sweat Pants (In Cold Weather)
- White Crew Socks
- School Approved Sneakers

Boys:

ALL BOYS IN GRADES 1-4 MUST OWN ONE (1) WHITE BUTTON DOWN SHIRT AND ONE (1) SCHOOL TIE FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

- Navy Pants
- Shirts: White Button Down Collar (Long or Short Sleeves), White Polo with school logo (Long or short sleeve),
- White Turtleneck with school logo
- Plaid Tie (To be Worn With Button Down Shirt Only)
- Navy or White Crew Socks
- Belt
- Sweaters (all with school logo): Navy V-Neck Cardigan, Navy V-Neck Pullover Sweater, Navy V-Neck Sweater Vest, Navy Polar Fleece
- Shoes: Uniform shoes are stocked by Flynn & O’Hara or Da Bar Too Shoe Store

Girls:

ALL GIRLS IN GRADES 1-8 MUST OWN ONE (1) COLLAR BLOUSE FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS. SKIRTS MAY NOT BE WORN MORE THAN TWO INCHES ABOVE THE KNEE.

- Grades 1-4: Black Watch Plaid Belted Tunic Jumper
- Blouses: White Polo Shirt (long or short sleeve) with school logo, White
 - Turtleneck with school logo. Grades 1-4: Peter Pan Collar Blouse (long or short sleeve)
- Navy Dress Slacks
- White or Navy Crew Socks or Knee-Hi Socks
- White or Navy Tights

- Sweaters (all with school logo): Navy V-Neck Cardigan (Grades 1-4), Navy V-Neck
- Shoes: Uniform shoes are stocked by Flynn & O'Hara or Da Bar Too Shoe Store

Grades 5-8 Uniform Policy

Uniform Policy must be followed and will be strictly enforced throughout the year.

Grade 5-8 Summer Uniform for Boys (Worn May 1st through October 15th)

- White Knit Short-Sleeved "Golf" Shirt
- Belt with Navy Walking Shorts (Knee-Length)
- White Crew Socks
- School Approved Sneakers or School Shoes (No Light Up)

*** All Uniform shirts must be tucked in at all times. ***

Grade 5-8 Summer Uniform for Girls (Worn May 1st through October 15th)

- White Short Sleeve Polo Shirt
- Navy Skort (Knee-Length)
- Navy Walking Shorts (Knee-Length)
- White Crew Socks or navy knee high stockings
- School Approved Sneakers or School Shoes (No Light Up)

Grade 5-8 Gym Uniform for Boys and Girls (Must be worn on Gym Days)

- Light Blue Gym T-Shirt
- Navy Micromesh Gym Shorts (Knee-Length)
- Navy Blue Sweatshirt (In Cold Weather)
- Navy Blue Sweat Pants (In Cold Weather)
- White Crew Socks
- School Approved Sneakers (No Light Up)
- Warm-up Suit

Grade 5-8 Winter Boys: (October 16th- April 30th)

All boys in grades 5-8 must wear a white button down shirt and school tie:

- Belt with Navy Pants
- Shirts: White Button Down Collar (Long or Short Sleeves) with Plaid Tie or White Turtleneck with school logo
- Navy, Black, or White Crew Socks
- Sweaters (all with school logo): Navy V-Neck Cardigan, Navy V-Neck Pullover
- Sweater, Navy V-Neck Sweater Vest, Navy Polar Fleece
- Shoes: Uniform shoes are stocked by Flynn & O'Hara or Da Bar Too Shoe Store

*** All Uniform shirts must be tucked in at all times. ***

Grade 5-8 Winter Girls: (October 16th- April 30th)

All girls in Grades 5-8 must wear one of the following uniform options:

- A white (non Peter-Pan) collar blouse, school vest, and tie with a Black Watch Plaid Wrap Around Kilt (Knee Length). Navy Opaque Stockings or Navy/White Knee Highs
- White Turtleneck with school logo with a Black Watch Plaid Wrap Around Kilt (Knee Length). Navy

- Opaque Stockings or Navy/White Knee Highs
- A white (non Peter-Pan) collar blouse, school vest, and tie with Navy Dress Slacks. White or Navy Crew Socks
- White Turtleneck with school logo with Navy Dress Slacks. White or Navy Crew Socks

***Please keep in mind that all skirts must allow for growth throughout the year. ***

*** All Uniform shirts must be tucked in at all times. ***

Sweaters (all with school logo): Navy V-Neck Sweater Vest or Navy Polar Fleece

Shoes: Uniform shoes (with a strap or shoe laces) are to be purchased from Flynn & O'Hara or Da Bar Too Shoe Store

Grades 5-8 Acceptable Jewelry

- Small Simple Earrings (plain studs or hoops only)
- One chain tucked inside blouse/shirt
- One Ring
- One Watch

***No Bracelets or Sweatbands are to be worn ***

Grades 5-8 Make-up: The following is NOT permitted:

- Facial Makeup (eyeliner, mascara, eyeshadow, etc.)
- Nail Polish/Fake Nails
- Colored or Bleached Hair

Makeup, lip gloss, nail tips, colored nail polish, rings (other than class ring),bracelets, and anything of similar nature are not allowed. The same policy is in effect on Dress Down and Gym days.

Clear nail polish is permitted

Dress Down Guidelines

There may be occasions in which students are allowed to wear non-uniform attire. Students are reminded to dress with modesty. Students should adhere to the following attire:

Students may wear:

- Jeans
- Sneakers
- Short socks
- Shorts no shorter than two inches above the knee
- Skirts no shorter than two inches above the knee
- Skorts no shorter than two inches above the knee
- Sweatshirts
- Sweatsuits
- Dresses no shorter than two inches above the knee
- Slacks

Students may not wear:

- Appropriate length skirt, short, or dress- no shorter than 3” above the knees
- Leggings or jeggings
- Crop tops (if you raise your hand, your stomach should not be showing)
- Flip-flop sandals
- Open back shoes
- Tank tops (spaghetti straps)
- T-shirts with inappropriate writing
- Peep Shoulder/Off the Shoulder shirts/sweatshirts
- Sneakers that convert to roller skates
- Any shorts shorter than two inches above the knee (Ex - Biker shorts)
- Pajama pants
- No jeans with holes
- Make-up, nail polish, jewelry
- Low-cut blouses/tops (Mid-drift should be covered at all times)
- Clothing that is extremely tight or form fitting (Ex -short tight shirt or bodysuit)
- Hats

All uniform regulations and guidelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Teachers and Principal.

Volunteers

Parent volunteers are highly encouraged. To volunteer at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy and to attend field trips, parents must complete free VIRTUS training. You can find a listing at www.virtus.org under the Diocese of Brooklyn organization. Please bring a copy of your certificate to school.

Parent volunteers and chaperones are an integral part of the school community. All parents/ legal guardians/ other adults, must complete VIRTUS training, sign a Code of Conduct, and complete a background check.

The VIRTUS program for adults is a three-hour live awareness session that instructs adults of the Church that to protect children you must have continuous awareness and vigilance. This awareness session helps trainees understand signs of child sexual abuse, the methods and means by which offenders commit abuse, and five empowerment steps to prevent child sexual abuse.

The Code of Conduct is a document that acknowledges the importance of legal, professional and responsible conduct of all who work with children and young people. All clergy, employees and volunteers are required to read the Code of Conduct and to sign a Statement of Acknowledgement Form. The Code of Conduct is distributed at all VIRTUS sessions.

All employees and volunteers are also required to have a criminal background screening completed before they start their employment or service. These forms are also distributed at all VIRTUS sessions. As of May 2010, all background screenings (employees and volunteers) will be done through the Safe Environment Office. The searches are done through LexisNexis (volunteers) or HireRight (employees). All information is kept confidential and if a positive result is returned, the pastor/administrator will be notified and appropriate steps

will be taken. Background searches will be rerun every 3 years for employees and 5 years for volunteers

Wall of Fame (Grades 1-8)

In order to earn a Wall of Fame dress down ticket and ice cream, students must be prepared for class and have:

- o No Missing Homework
- o No Infractions
- o No Uniform Violations
- o No Unexcused Absences
- o No Unexcused Lateness

Students on the Wall of Fame will get a special Celebration Day when they will be allowed to dress down and will receive ice cream. They will also be photographed and their picture placed on the Wall of Fame bulletin board.

COVID-19

**All health related policies and procedures have been adopted from the regulations published by the NYC Department of Education in partnership with the NYC Board of Health.*

15.1 Hygiene and Health Requirements

Face Coverings

Students are required to wear face coverings when in the school building and maintain appropriate social/physical distancing. Students should bring an appropriate face covering from home. The school will have surgical masks available for students as needed. Students' cloth face coverings should be clearly identified with their names or initials, to avoid confusion or swapping. Students' face coverings may also be labeled to indicate top/bottom and front/back. Non-disposable mask should be washed daily.

All visitors to the school for any reason will always be required to wear a face covering while on school grounds or in the school building. Faculty and Staff are also required to wear masks

All masks for faculty, staff, and students are subject to approval by the principal and Office of the Superintendent of Schools. Masks should be plain and free of any objectionable statements or support for any group, product, political view, and so on, other than the name of their Parish School or Catholic Academy.

Students will be provided opportunities for short breaks to remove masks throughout the day, while social distancing, in addition to removing them during outdoor times and while eating.

Social Distancing

Classrooms and other school areas will be set up to ensure social distancing between students. Students will also be required to maintain social distance when they are not at their desk. This is particularly important when students are not wearing face coverings such as while eating or during mask breaks.

Health Policies

If a student or staff members displays symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day, the following procedures will be followed:

- Each building will have a designated Isolation Room for students or staff who display symptoms
- A student showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be escorted to the Isolation Room by a staff member wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- The area where the student was showing symptoms will be immediately cleaned and disinfected.
- The student will be evaluated by the nurse/health professional in the Isolation Room.
- A family member or guardian will be contacted by a staff member and asked to pick up the student.
- Upon pick up, the nurse/health professional and school staff will strongly advise the family to visit a doctor and get the student tested for COVID-19
- Any student placed in the Isolation Room will be adequately supervised by a staff member during this time until the ill student can be picked up.

Health Screenings

Parents/ legal guardians will be asked to check student temperatures and screen students for symptoms prior to their arrival to school grounds. In the event that parents/ legal guardians are unable to do so, school staff members will be designated to complete health screenings. It is asked that all parents/ legal guardians are vigilant in temperature and symptom screenings for their children for the safety of other students as well as staff members. School staff will also perform random temperature screenings for both students and staff members using no-touch thermometers.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- Fever of 100.0°F or higher or chills
- Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing,
- Fatigue,
- Muscle or body aches,
- Headache,
- Loss of taste or smell,
- Sore throat, congestion or runny nose,
- Nausea or vomiting,
- Diarrhea.

Students Excluded from In-Person Learning

School-based staff and students cannot report to school if they have:

- Been knowingly in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19.
- Tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- Experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, in the past 14 days.
- Traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days.

Returning to School after Showing Symptoms

Any individual (student or staff member) showing signs of COVID-19 can only return to school when the following conditions are met:

- Received a positive COVID-19 test AND
- Isolated for 10 days AND
- Presents clearance from a healthcare provider AND
- The individual has been symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication.

OR

- Received a negative COVID-19 test AND
- Presents clearance from a healthcare provider AND
- The individual has been symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication.

OR

- Never got a COVID-19 test AND
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms started AND
- Presents clearance from a healthcare provider AND
- The individual has been symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication.

If DOHMH or NYC Test & Trace Corps determine the individual is considered a close contact of a positive case, the individual can only return to school when all the following are met:

- The individual has completed a 14-day quarantine regardless of symptoms or COVID-19 test results since their last exposure to that case AND
- Presents clearance from a health care provider evaluation AND
- The student has been symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication.
- Students in quarantine should participate in remote learning if feeling well enough.

School Closures

Academies and parish schools within the Diocese of Brooklyn will continue to work to provide in-person learning as long as it is safe to do so. Academies and parish schools will follow guidance from local Board of Health officials as well as directives from the City of New York to ensure student safety.

Per the New York City Department of Education “In order for schools to reopen and stay open, the percentage of positive tests in New York City must be less than 3% using a 7-day rolling average. Schools will need to close if the percentages of positive tests in New York City are equal to or more than 3% using a 7-day rolling average. It is important to note that the above threshold is just one trigger for closing schools but may not be the only trigger. For example, a decision to close schools would be made where there were recurrent, uncontrolled outbreaks of COVID-19 in schools, even if the overall case rates across New York City were to remain low.”

In the event of positive cases reported within the school community, the following procedures will be followed per NYC Test & Trace Corps and DOHMH Investigations:

Number of Cases	During Investigation (at least 24 hrs)	After Investigation
One confirmed case in a classroom	Close classroom with positive case, transition to remote learning	Classroom remains closed for 14 days; Students and staff in close contact with positive case quarantine for 14 days
At least two cases linked together in school, same classroom	Close classroom with positive cases, transition to remote learning	Classroom remains closed for 14 days; Students and staff in close contact with positive cases quarantine for 14 days
At least two cases linked together in school, different classrooms	Close school building, transition to remote learning	Classroom or each case remains closed for 14 days; Students and staff in close contact with positive cases quarantine for 14 days. Additional school members are quarantined based on where the exposure was in the school (e.g., the locker room)
At least two cases linked together by circumstances outside of school (e.g., acquired infection by different setting and source)	Close school building, transition to remote learning	School opens after investigation; Classrooms remain closed for 14 days
At least two cases, not linked but exposure confirmed for each outside of school setting	Close school building, transition to remote learning	School opens after investigation; Classrooms remain closed for 14 days
Link unable to be determined	Close school building, transition to remote learning	Close school for 14 days

Distance Learning

Distance learning that is facilitated by a Catholic Academy or Parish School within the Diocese of Brooklyn is bound by all parts of the Acceptable Use Policy. As distance learning requires the use of other mediums such as teleconferencing platforms, virtual classrooms, digital file transfer and online work, there are other factors that need to be addressed.

- Device Usage – The use of school/academy or personal devices for distance learning is allowed. It is recommended that all school/academy issued accounts only be used for schoolwork purposes and that those accounts are signed out of after work is completed. All usage is governed by this policy.
- Video/Audio Conferencing – Video or audio-conferencing platforms may be used to facilitate class meetings and communication between teachers and students for teaching and group work. When using these platforms, participants must remember to conduct themselves in a professional manner commensurate with behavior expected in a physical classroom. Entering meetings other than those you are explicitly invited to by the coordinator (teacher, principal, etc.) is strictly prohibited. Trying to circumvent the security of a meeting, “hijacking” a presentation or displaying any objectionable content during a meeting is a direct violation of this policy and subject to the disciplinary actions contained within. Recording of video/audio conferences is also prohibited.
- File Transfer/Submission – The transmittal of files may be required at times for teachers to provide and students to submit work. The willful transfer of objectionable material, malicious content or any other such transmissions is a violation of this policy.
- Learning Platforms – The use of learning platforms such as ThinkCentral, Learn360, Mathletics, Microsoft 365, Google Classroom and others is for the sole purpose of supporting and furthering the education of students. Any use of these platforms for any other reason may be considered a violation of this policy.
- Any use or misuse of the technology provided for distance learning that interferes with the education of students or the operations of the school/academy is a violation of this policy.

The Policies in this Handbook May be Amended at Any Time by the Principal

OUR LADY OF MERCY CATHOLIC ACADEMY

HANDBOOK AGREEMENT (2020-2021)

I certify that I have read this handbook and will abide by all policies within. I understand that the principal has the authority to revise this handbook as needed, and will notify parents of any changes in writing. I understand that failure by families to comply with policies may result in dismissal from Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy.

Student's Name _____ Grade ____

Student's Signature (Gr. 1-8) _____

Parent's Signature (All Grades) _____